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Maritime Administration Announces Environmental Assessment for National Defense Reserve Fleet Sites

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration is asking for public comment on its Draft Programmatic Environmental Assessment for the admittance, maintenance and disposal of vessels at the National Defense Reserve Fleet sites it operates. The Draft Programmatic Environmental Assessment can be viewed at http://www.regulations.gov for the next 45 days.

"The Maritime Administration has taken a hard look at our National Defense Reserve Fleet program and we are confident that we can fulfill our statutory mission while at the same time ensuring the highest levels of environmental protection. With the step taken today, the Maritime Administration continues its leadership role in removing these ships in an appropriate fashion, and we look forward to receiving comments from the public," said Maritime Administration Sean T. Connaughton.

The Draft Programmatic Environmental Assessment includes options for cleaning and maintaining ships, and for setting standards for the condition of ships that enter the fleet in the future.

The Maritime Administration currently has 244 ships in the National Defense Reserve Fleet to support Armed Forces movements and to respond to national emergencies. Three fleet sites contain retention and non-retention vessels, and are located at the James River Reserve Fleet in Newport News, Virginia; Beaumont Reserve Fleet in Beaumont, Texas; and Suisun Bay Reserve Fleet in Benicia, California. When the ships become obsolete, the Maritime Administration arranges for their disposition in an environmentally-sensitive manner.

Currently there are 123 non-retention vessels awaiting disposal. Twenty of these vessels are under contract for recycling, while 103 remain in the fleet awaiting disposal action.

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